

VZCZCXRO2682

RR RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHDBU RUEHDF RUEHFL RUEHIK RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHLN  
RUEHLZ RUEHNP RUEHPOD RUEHROV RUEHSK RUEHSR RUEHVK RUEHYG  
DE RUEHDA #0020 0981514  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 081514Z APR 09  
FM AMCONSUL ADANA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4723  
INFO RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 1265  
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0153  
RUEHKB/AMEMBASSY BAKU 0027  
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE USD FAS WASHINGTON DC  
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHFSC/USOFFICE FSC CHARLESTON SC 0036  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 1063  
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHSI/AMEMBASSY TBILISI 0020  
RUEHYE/AMEMBASSY YEREVAN 0022  
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 1328

UNCLAS ADANA 000020

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: VIOLENT AFTERSHOCKS CONTINUE IN SANLIURFA AFTER  
APRIL 4 CLASHES CLAIM TWO LIVES

11. (SBU) SUMMARY. Tensions continue in Kurdish-populated areas of Sanliurfa province after two protesters were fatally injured during clashes with police on April 4, the birthday of jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan. Community leaders dispute official declarations that police did not use firearms to subdue protesters, pointing to one autopsy result that concludes death by bullet. April 6 saw more violent clashes with police after residents acted in response to what they say was police brutality. Frictions remain high, in part because the region is still absorbing the pro-Kurdish party DTP's recent electoral successes . END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) Sanliurfa Human Rights Association President Sedat Gozkiran confirmed media reports of violence that claimed the lives of two protesters in Halfeti district on April 4, the 60th birthday of the imprisoned leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) Abdullah Ocalan. Gozkiran said the annual march to the small village of Omerli, Ocalan's birthplace, had taken place for many years, and while minor scuffles with law enforcement officials were typical, this was the first year there were fatalities. Gozkiran told us police had blockaded all but one road to Halfeti, obliging marchers to use a single route, the passage of which was also ultimately closed. Violence erupted when marchers tried to force their way through the police, who responded with tear gas and water cannons.

13. (SBU) While the Sanliurfa Governor Yusuf Yavascan has denied security forces used firearms to subdue the protesters, both Gozkiran and provincial Bar Association President Yaya Demirkol told us a recently completed autopsy showed one of the protesters had been killed by a gunshot to his head. The autopsy results of the other deceased protester, who hailed from Diyarbakir, have not been released.

14. (U) In a continuing rash of violence in Kurdish-populated areas of Sanliurfa province, media report on the night of April 6 approximately 100 protesters demonstrated in Viransehir district, overturning dumpsters, setting fire to debris, and hurling stones and Molotov cocktails at local police. Law enforcement responded with tear gas. The group waved PKK flags and posters of Ocalan.

15. (SBU) COMMENT. Gozkiran pointed out that had police allowed the protesters to march peacefully to Ocalan's village, it is likely no violence would have occurred. While Ocalan's birthday was the proximate cause of the unrest, the DTP's recent electoral success - including in the Halfeti region -- may have amplified the emotions. Across the region, the question now is whether the DTP's better than expected election results will reduce tensions or lead to rising expectations for faster change. Much will depend on AKP's attitude towards the DTP. If AKP continues to treat DTP as a party of protest, the DTP and its supporters will be more inclined to act recklessly. An inclusive approach would likely have a moderating influence.

END COMMENT.

GREEN